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volunteer

MARCH 1968

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How working with host agencies can effect

'Poor power'

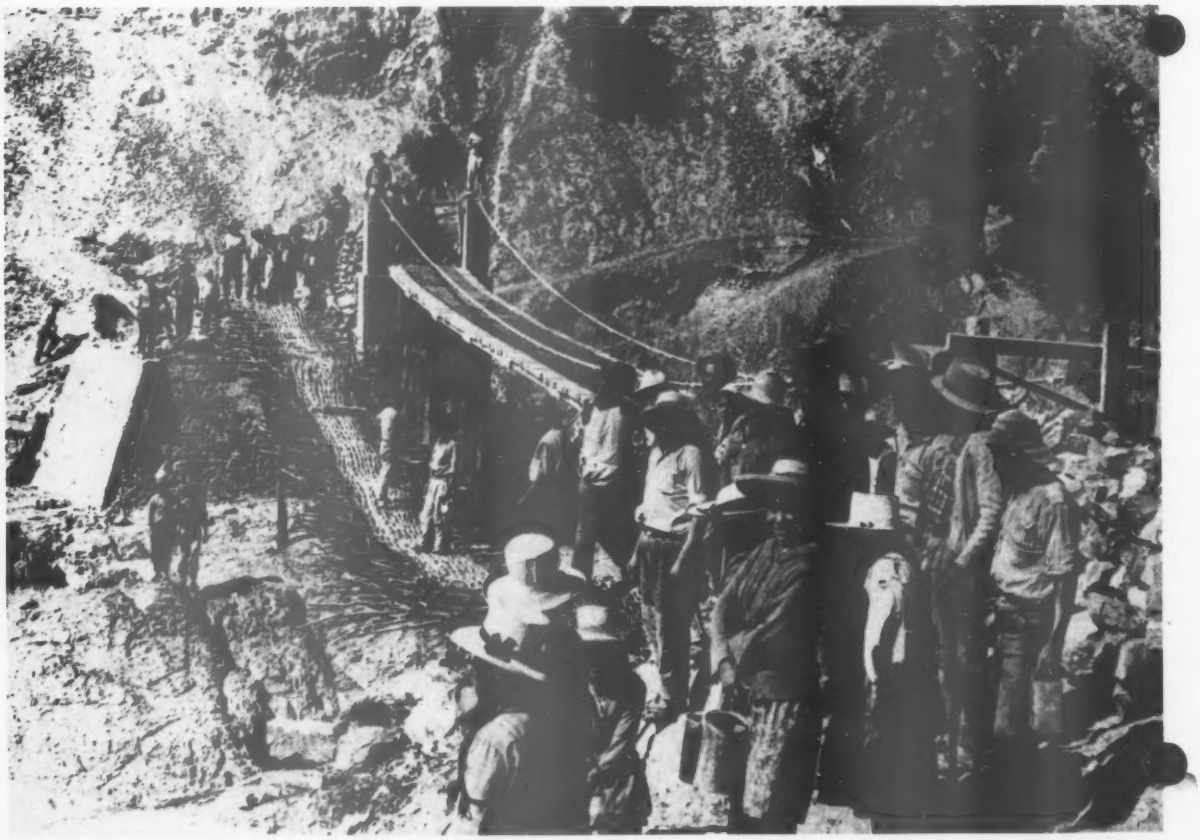
By GINO BAUMANN

La Paz, Bolivia

After several years of experience, many of us in the Peace Corps have learned that a Peace Corps Volunteer needs an identity, that he has to be plugged in with an agency for maximum efficiency. I am not talking about the exceptional two to five per cent of the Peace Corps Volunteers who can do a great job as free-lancers. There is room for them, and if spotted by staff they can be let loose and used to great advantage. I am saying that most Volunteers can be more effective when they are linked with an institution than when they are working as independent agents, and that they are at the same time doing a service to the host country by strengthening already existing institutions.

An input of Peace Corps Volunteers with an institution, even a thoroughly bureaucratic institution, creaky with old age and administrative arthritis, does serve change. Granted, this change may be difficult to measure. The Volunteer is bound to bring a fresh breeze, perhaps a new irritant to the agency. The irritant might be in the form of regular attendance, of punctuality, the example of taking the agency's mission seriously, or of bringing in *campesinos* for assistance (the agency might have forgotten that to help the *campesino* was once its raison d'etre). This might be a necessary prodding of the host nationals who might have become bogged down in the daily exercise of killing time.

"Poor power" in Latin America, a term used by the deputy director of



the Latin America Region, Tom McBride, is almost tantamount to what may be called "brown power." Our work with agencies should be directed primarily toward those agencies that purport to serve or respond to the needs and the demands of the *campesinos,* the "brown power" seekers. We must act as a bridge between them and the official who has a bottle of alcohol on his desk to disinfect his hands after a handshake with his clients who represent "brown power." We must show our faith in the barefooted, smelly, coarse, almost illiterate Indian's ability to become a functioning, integral part of his society. Our egalitarian, melting-pot heritage provides us with the tools to work not only in Harlem and the rural South but also in the thousands of poverty areas across the world. If we conceive of agencies as the servants of people we need to be in them to keep them in touch with the peoples' rising expectations. Agencies and local politics being what they are, we will be in and out, successful and unsuccessful, but we must strive to *stay in.*

During a period of more than three years in the field as a Peace Corps staff member, Volunteers in my areas and I have worked with some three dozen types of agencies ranging from mental hospitals to unions to traffic departments to co-ops to Rotary clubs. I have seen Volunteer-host agency relationships at the grass roots level that have achieved outstanding results in terms of mutual growth, understanding and innovation. I have seen attempts by the national Peace Corps office at integration at the top level fail dismally, because of a lack of time for adequate interpersonal relations, plus built-in remoteness of the national administration from the actual sites of projects.

I am saying that the basic public relations work of Volunteers and regional directors vis-a-vis the host agencies is of uppermost importance. A mid-morning coffee, the clicking of the cocktail glasses at a local party, cornerstone laying, distribution of diplomas and community involvement in general provide the cement that makes for the relationship conducive to the sort of talk with host nationals that we call in Latin America *hablar con calzon quitado* (to talk with one's pants down).

Careful cultivation of host agency

Taking stock

Former Peru Volunteers Sharen and Peter Gendebien examined five bridge building projects which took place in Peru during a two-year period. They were particularly interested in the host agency relationship to each project, and noted the evolution in host involvement: the first bridge, they discovered, was almost purely *gringo*—both technically and financially. With succeeding bridge projects, both host agencies and villagers became more and more involved.

The individual histories of two of the bridges, pictured here, help illustrate growing involvement.

The suspension bridge in Canacota (near left) was the third bridge constructed. Peruvian institutions were persuaded to completely finance the bridge, providing materials and transportation. The construction, undertaken by the villagers, was slow—interrupted by Canacota's fiesta season, a measles epidemic, and the planting season.

(continued on next page, column 3)

personnel is simply a part of the job. These people ought to be invited to selection boards, to site assignment discussions, to visit the U.S. training sites and to participate in social events on the local level with Peace Corps Volunteers and staff. If Volunteers and host national agency personnel click, become friends and intellectual stimulants to one another, the job of institution building can become a very rewarding one. For once the Volunteer gains the confidence and trust of the host agencies he can begin to implant new ideas and can serve as a link between them and the *campesino*. On the contrary, if the Volunteer is considered a threat, an outsider, little can be achieved.

Apart from building a firm foundation with good personal relations, no broad rules about institution building can be made. The circumstances differ too much from place to place. That institution building is part of nation building and part of development is irrefutable. Institutions are the necessary framework through which societies tick. But the differences from country to country are enormous. For example, Peru's institutions have evolved organically, with no revolutionary upheaval to interrupt their growth. On the other hand, Bolivia swept away most of its rural institutions in the revolution of 1952. Since then, new ones have emerged which have not yet calcified beyond the possibility of outside influence. Then, too, there is the difference between institutions in the Indian Altiplano where change from a feudal barter society to the twentieth century is slow, contrasted with the dynamic, expansive, entrepreneurial Santa Cruz where the concept of fast change is accepted and visible to all, illustrating the great differences in the potential for Peace Corps Volunteer influences in any given place. The Peace Corps needs careful country-by-country, even region-by-region, analysis and research on the nature of institutions and the culture and the politics in which they operate so as to know how to approach the institution building process.

Gino Baumann is the Peace Corps director in Bolivia. Previously he was the associate director in Arequipa, Peru. He lived in Indianapolis where he was employed in a self-help housing project and was active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He has directed projects for the American Friends Service Committee in Mexico and in U.S. urban areas, for the Council of Churches in Haiti, for Service Civil International in Algeria. He was a volunteer in international work camps in Germany, Austria, England, France, Algeria, Mexico and the U.S.

(continued from page 3)

Building was supervised by Volunteers and a Peruvian engineer.

The fifth bridge (page two) was built in Cacahuara, where for five years villagers had been seeking bridge materials and technical assistance from a Peruvian development corporation. Peace Corps staff had also previously visited the corporation to discuss areas of possible cooperation. As a result, the corporation requested that Volunteers visit Cacahuara to make site studies, plans and cost estimates for a new bridge. Then the corporation authorized Volunteers to direct construction of the bridge and provided full financial support.

The Gendebien report says the Volunteers encountered a very favorable working environment at Cacahuara. Their arrival date had been pre-arranged—the villagers had worked for four days stockpiling stones, sand and gravel; painting, and transporting materials to the site. In addition, 30 to 40 villagers came to work each day.

In their bridge study, the Gendebiens draw conclusions which apply to other Peace Corps projects as well. Some of these findings are:

• Volunteers should rely on the local or host authorities for almost every action to be taken. This tactic in some cases markedly raises the self-confidence of these authorities and improves their effectiveness. Some good demonstrations of such dependence are to expect the local people to provide such things as mule-hours of transportation, food and housing for Volunteers, and a constant work force.

• U.S. seed financing along with tactful social—as well as professional—Peace Corps attitudes, can lead to host country institutional involvement and eventually to better public opinion of these institutions.

• Through association with various development organizations in the host country, along with the backing and politicking of Peace Corps staff, Volunteers can help develop inter-institutional coordination.

• Volunteers can act as effective channels by which village requests go to and through host country institutions.

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ON THE COVER: Tomas Sennett photographed this road scene in Uttar Pradesh, India. The Volunteers pictured work in food production.

A present-day Volunteer discusses some of the problems of living with

The legends of Volunteers past

By JAMES McCAFFERY

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

A small, searing, white dot hanging high in an otherwise flawless azure sky, the noonday sun never moved, just stayed in one place, motionless, smothering everything with its penetrating heat. Sitting by the dusty gravel road, we kept looking hopefully for a car or a truck or a mule—anything—to take us out of this inferno and up the road to our destination. A slight movement far down the road attracted our attention but, much to our chagrin, we realized that it was only a man, ambling slowly towards us, blurred slightly by the silent, shimmering heat waves. After a time, the tiny figure became a larger figure and soon arrived at our little station on the road. We had been waiting for three hours, trying to hitch a ride to Bahar Dar and this was the first moving thing to pass us during that time.

Only he didn't pass us.

He stopped, a young man of about 23 years, and stared at us, leaning lazily on his walking stick. Then, perhaps noticing our dusty, beaten up clothes or my friend's telephoto lens or understanding implicitly that only Peace Corps Volunteers would be insane enough to attempt hitching a ride on this road, he blurted out, "You are Peace Corps."

We didn't ask him how he knew. Everybody knows, even though we don't wear a uniform. Or do we?

"Yes," I replied through baked lips, "we are at that."

"The Peace Corps," he began, "is a great thing for Ethiopia. When I went to secondary school back in 1962, the time when the first Volunteers were here, I knew all the Peace Corps Volunteers who taught in the town."

"Oh?", my friend groaned, both of us cringing at what we knew was coming.

"Yes," he continued enthusiastically, "one Volunteer supported eight

students both years he was here. A great fellow. Another paid for two students, enabling them to study in Addis Ababa. But the best Volunteer was that one who took his student with him when he returned to the States."

And, as he continued, I managed to shut him out of my mind. Here it was again, in the middle of a scorching day on a dry, dusty road in Gojjam province. Inescapable. Ubiquitous.

The Legacy.

The thing which all Peace Corps Volunteers who came after the first group had to learn to live with and which all Volunteers in the future will have to cope with.

The legends of Volunteers Past.

At first it was interesting, even fun, to hear stories of old Volunteers. Then, after hearing the stories a couple of times, it grew boring. After that, when we realized that we were expected to live up (or down, as the case may be) to long gone Volunteers, it became irritating. Finally, it grew maddening, especially when it became apparent that some of the things which they did and about which we had heard so much were at the root of some of our present problems.

Since the Peace Corps is no longer a pioneering venture and because most people who enter the Peace Corps today will follow in the footsteps of other Peace Corps Volunteers, it is pertinent to examine some of the problems of being a "second generation" Volunteer. Because of the limitations of space, this is not meant to be an exhaustive report, delineating all problems of this nature faced by today's Peace Corps Volunteer, but only a brief examination of what are, hopefully, representative examples—student support and language—and their importance to Volunteers past and present.

Anxious greetings

One of the first sights which the new Volunteer teacher sees when he enters his town for the first time is a group of eager, nervous looking students, each desperately grasping a crumpled piece of paper. On the piece of paper, the Volunteer soon finds out, is a plea for help, invoking everyone from God to the old Volunteer (not necessarily in that order).

With some of the more aggressive students the plea approaches something a bit stronger than a request:

"You must support me. Mr. Smerdely supported me last year. He said a new Peace Corps Volunteer would come to take his place and help me. Therefore you must help me."

Or sometimes it is more polite:

"Hello, how are you? I am fine. You will support me this year?"

Once in a while, it comes in the form of a note directly from one of those legendary figures of the past:

Dear New Volunteer,

I hope you will be able to support this fine student. I am certain that you will find him honest, loyal, poor, etc.

Yours,
Frederick Supervol

If the Volunteer resists the initial wave of students and refrains from agreeing to support the whole ninth grade, the more ingenious student will show up later and very subtley imply that the Peace Corps Volunteer doesn't quite measure up to the Volunteers of the past because he isn't supporting enough students. Since it is very difficult to figure out something worthwhile to do outside of school, it is very easy to accept the proposition that supporting students is one of those "extra responsibilities" of the Peace Corps Volunteer. It is also comfortable, because past Volunteers always did it, and painless, since it requires little effort other than reaching into one's pocket once a week.

However, among the Volunteers who have come during the past year or two, there has been a general reappraisal of this unspoken custom. Some of the inequities have become apparent. For instance, if there are a thousand students in a school, why pick one or two when most are about equal in poverty? More important, how does one know who is really poor and deserving of help?

Moreover, some of the hazards also began to be discussed. Many Volunteers had money or things stolen from their houses by their students. Some Volunteers learned that they were supporting incorrigible cheaters or students who had almost as much money as the Volunteer. (For example, after school had closed one year, one Volunteer came home to find that his student had hired several men and a horse-drawn

cart to carry his baggage to the bus station. This made the Volunteer suspect that his help wasn't quite crucial for the welfare of this student.)

Then there were the more subtle hazards, which the first groups of Volunteers could not have possibly foreseen. For instance, what happens after the Volunteer leaves? The student has become accustomed to living in a certain manner and finds it hard to adjust. So he asks future Volunteers for support—and if he can't get help, he sometimes uses it as a convenient excuse for quitting school or for decrying the Volunteers who refused to help him. More important, how does living with an American, a creature with completely different cultural and moral habits, influence the young, impressionable student? Does it make him better equipped to cope with his own society? Or does it frustrate him by showing him what he thinks may be a better way of life without offering any hope of living such a life?

Underemployment

Many Volunteers gave their students little work to do or, because they supported so many students, couldn't find work for them all. This had two effects. First, it reinforced the student's attitude that manual labor is bad and that if one is a student one should never have to work. (This is one of the major problems of most underdeveloped countries.) Second, it gave the Peace Corps a reputation as a "soft touch" for students who wanted money but weren't overly industrious.

Another more general attitude engendered by student support was one where students seemed to judge Peace Corps Volunteers as being valuable according to the number of students they supported and how much money they doled out to these students.

A second example of the Legacy concerns language. In many Peace Corps countries, especially those with teaching projects, language was not emphasized. For example, during that traumatic first day of training when we were being informed of the program in store for us, the project director said that language was very important, but not crucial, to our success in Ethiopia.

Not crucial?

Click.

Immediately nine-tenths of the people turned off on language. In a condensed program, that which was not crucial simply had to be forgotten. This attitude was reinforced by former Volunteers who told us confidently that they hardly ever used the language when they were in the country.

"Everybody speaks English," they said repeatedly.

Of course, they didn't add that most of them couldn't have used the language even had they wanted to. But it was a comforting thought, knowing that language wasn't important, especially because it was so damn hard. Furthermore, there were so many other important things to do, like running 2,000 laps around the P.E. field every day or slapping plastic wounds on the foreheads of other trainees (first aid training).

In the past, this language deficiency has proved, because of the very limited command of English which most Ethiopians have, especially in the provinces, to be a distinct barrier to communication. (It goes without saying that the uneducated can speak no English at all.) Furthermore, many Volunteers complained that after two years in the

country they had never really gotten to know an Ethiopian, implying, at the same time, that it was the fault of the latter. In reality, however, it was most likely caused by the Volunteer's inability to speak Amharic and his unwillingness to struggle with broken English. In addition, ignorance of the indigenous language was, and is, one of the main reasons for the closed "Peace Corps community" prevalent in so many towns. When the Volunteer can only speak English he tends, after the initial surge of enthusiasm wears down, to talk mainly with other Volunteers. It is still somewhat puzzling that Peace Corps could purport to be a "people to people" organization, yet devote so little effort to the language of the host country.

Support changing

However, within the last year, both of these situations have begun to undergo considerable change. The idea of student support is altering. Peace Corps Volunteers are now searching for methods of help which will reach a greater number of students and which will be more effective and lasting than simple monetary support—a method which will enable the student to help himself so that, when the Peace Corps Volunteer leaves, the student will be able to continue his studies even if a new Peace Corps Volunteer doesn't come. The present generation of Volunteers (perhaps partly as a result of the decreased living allowance) is much more strict with its money for students, much more stringent in its demands for student work if they do support students, and much less likely to support an excessive number of students. This has changed the atmosphere in Peace Corps towns so much that now, when new Volunteers arrive, they are no longer inundated by hordes of students, all claiming previous Peace Corps support and, in effect, begging for more.

Language is now being emphasized, both in training and in the host country. Last summer's training program, for example, had, for the first time in the history of Peace Corps Ethiopia, a minimum FSI score which all Volunteers had to attain or face de-selection. Although it is still difficult for many Volunteers to learn the language, at least attitudes have changed enough so that many Volunteers study the language after arriving in the country. This was very rare in the past. There is also a language officer now, someone to provide the Volunteers with language materials and to organize language conferences at various times throughout the year. Although it will take time to reverse the inertial flow of hundreds of Volunteers who passed through the country without learning the language, and who then justified this by insisting it wasn't important, at least a start has been made.

In general, many things are changing today—present-day Volunteers are just beginning to overturn some of the misdirected actions of earlier Peace Corps Volunteers. The first Volunteers were successful in great part because of the "Peace Corps Idea" and the novelty of it and not because of their actual performance. For example, the original Peace Corps Volunteer did not have to know the language; it was enough to smile at a host country national and mutter a few garbled words to him. It was amazing enough having a foreigner out in the bush somewhere.

But that is not enough now.

Today, the Peace Corps Volunteer has to be able to speak the language. Otherwise, in the eyes of the students and townspeople, he will acquire the image of an expatriate teacher, living within his own community and venturing out of his house only to make his way to school. Also, it will help to make it possible for Volunteers to have more meaningful relationships with people in the community. This might then eliminate some of the cynicism like that of the Volunteer who felt that after two years he had never made any friends except with other Peace Corps Volunteers. It might also serve as a release for the pressures caused by the close contact between the Volunteers in one town.

As another example, the first generation of Volunteers couldn't possibly have seen the effects of its student support. The present generation, cognizant of the effects of this type of support, is working to change them, to get rid of the image of the "soft touch" and to help students by other means—by good teaching, for example, or by directing students in methods of working their way through school within the context of the indigenous culture and by using resources which will always be available to them, not just those provided temporarily by the Peace Corps Volunteer.

It is not the contention here to prove that the first Volunteers were failures for, to fail, there must be some standard of success and when they came there was obviously no such standard (and probably never will be). It necessarily takes a certain amount of time for a new program, especially one like the Peace Corps, to iron out its problems and ascertain what things work best. With five years of experience to draw upon, the Peace Corps is simply gaining a much better sense of direction than it was even possible to have before.

The first Volunteers probably had a wilder and, perhaps, a more interesting time and were accepted immediately because of the Peace Corps "Idea," whereas present Volunteers have to prove themselves by their deeds, not by their novelty value. (The "bland Volunteer" charge may stem from this change in in-country conditions rather than from any major change in the types of Volunteers that are now joining the Peace Corps.)

New direction

It seems that we are beginning, only beginning, to prove ourselves, and the Volunteers who come after us in the next years will have even a better chance to improve upon this general trend. Hopefully our legacy will provide future Volunteers with a bit better direction than the one left us by the first generation. If it doesn't, if actual experience in the field and the resulting feedback does not provide better direction, it would seem to indicate that the Peace Corps is a colossal failure and that the American is not perceptive enough, or perhaps not really willing, to live in another culture and understand the problems and perplexities of that culture.

As a member of Group VII in Ethiopia, James McCaffery arrived in-country four years after the first Volunteers went there, and during the past one and a half years he has been a "second generation" Volunteer in both rural and urban sites. He is now an English teacher in Addis Ababa, and a correspondent for THE VOLUNTEER. *He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin.*

What it means when returned Volunteers describe their Peace Corps service like this:

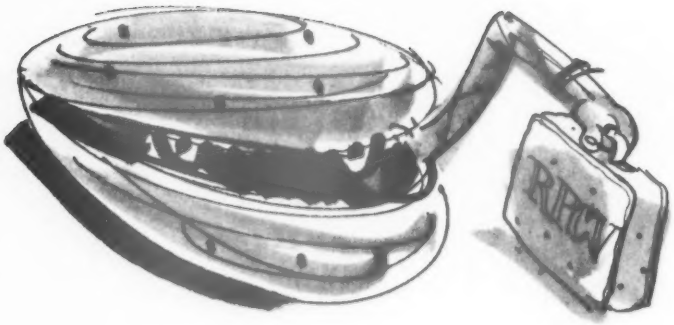
"Well, it was beautiful, man"

By ROD FRENCH

The late Marilyn Monroe reportedly once attempted to explain to her then husband, Joe DiMaggio, what it felt like to receive a spectacularly noisy ovation at one of the stops on her tour of military posts in Korea. In an effort to make a connection with her story, DiMaggio recalled one of the ovations which had greeted him on the day of a big game near the end of his career. To his surprise, she resented the great slugger's suggestion that he did have a basis for understanding something of what she had experienced. From Miss Monroe's standpoint, her story had to be unique and, as she was not the most articulate of women, it had to be accepted as essentially ineffable.

I wonder how many people have opened what promised to be a serious conversation with a returned Peace Corps Volunteer about his experience overseas only to be turned off after three minutes of generalities? The stopper is often a good-natured declaration to the effect that the hearer could not in his wildest dreams imagine what it was really like.

The returned Volunteer is correct to believe that not many people are in a position, by virtue of their own direct experience, to comprehend what the Volunteer has seen and done and felt. The problem is that if he cannot learn how to talk about it with people of other backgrounds, he probably cannot succeed in integrating it into his total personality. He will be forced to carry his experience around as a beautiful but useless treasure, guarding against all



attempts to analyze it, however intelligent and sympathetic they may be. Consequently he will find it hard to adjust creatively to new environments because to do so would mean risking the loss of his unassimilated, unique memories.

Wiser and older men may point out that this is simply one more chapter in an archetypal American struggle. Many Volunteers have already seen the point. But it isn't necessarily comforting to see oneself in historical perspective, to realize that the quest for individuality pushed this nation across the continent and then, in 1961, onto New Frontiers across the world. After two years of pioneering abroad, it is precisely the return to American culture in which most primary human experiences have become hopelessly standardized which makes the identity problem so critical.

'Nobody listens'

The returned Volunteer has a point when he blames his communication hang-up on the general vacuity of American culture in all of its conventional manifestations. Because his explanations of his articulation hang-ups ("I have plenty to say about what I learned overseas, but nobody wants to listen") are never entirely rationalizations, it is even more difficult for him to locate the reality of his experience in the American context.

The Volunteer correctly perceives that his successful reentry could involve the erosion of many distinctive personality features acquired during two years overseas. He must chart a nervous, narrow path between continuing social maladjustment and a too thorough reacculturation to American life.

Sometimes, in an effort to sustain a faltering conversation, well-meaning people ask the Volunteer what he did overseas. Presumably it should be easy enough for an educated person to talk in confident and concrete terms about something that he *did* during 24 months of service.

The most likely result of this tack is the raising of a new set of anxieties in the Volunteer. When one American asks another what he did on such and such a project he normally expects a well-defined reply, if not a quantified statement of results. Many Volunteers are not certain they *did* anything that could be reduced to such terms. Those Volunteers who can point to increased crop production, pupils taught to read, roads built, and so on are not always sure they *did* the really important thing.

This anxiety is anticipated by Peace Corps trainers and other staff. Recruits are encouraged to see the ambiguities of result-thinking and to try to picture themselves as agents of social change. Most American college graduates are sufficiently sophisticated about processes of social change to appreciate the fundamental importance of changing popular attitudes and values. Unfortunately this positive insight into their role leads to new complexities for sensitive Volunteers.

If they weren't in a somewhat ambivalent relation to the dominant values of our own culture they wouldn't have dropped out of it and into the Peace Corps in the first place. What, then, is their authority for calling into question the life presuppositions on which the attitudes and goals of another society are based? Furthermore, because the good Volunteer experiences an unusually deep penetration of his host culture he often comes to revise his initial evaluation of the social attitudes of the so-called developing societies. He may find himself more the subject of change than its instrument.

A leading question

The ostensibly simple question—What did you do overseas?—thus raises the lid on some paradoxes that are not apt to be resolved in social conversations. Should a Volunteer say straight out that the most important consequence of his two years of overseas service was the transformation of his own values and attitudes? Presumably Congress did not establish the program for the edification of young citizens; host countries certainly have larger, more utilitarian objectives when they invite ever-larger contingents of Volunteers.

This point is fairly obvious and has been discussed exhaustively in other contexts. All I want to do here is to indicate that it has a definite bearing on the difficulties surrounding the Volunteer's reentry into our society.

Sometimes, rather than confront head-on the paradoxes latent in his experience, the Volunteer will simply tell a story, or stories. The anecdote is the traditional favorite of those who have undergone profound, extraordinary or decisive experiences outside the boundaries of the common. Religious literature in all cultures is heavily anecdotal. Those who survive military campaigns tell stories of horror and heroism, if they talk at all. The exchange of "war stories" is at the very heart of communication within the Peace Corps.

Good anecdotes have the great advantage of being graphic and historical. They are not, however, the solution to all communication require-

ments. If a man tells a story in answer to my question I cannot be immediately sure whether he means for this particular story to stand as his answer in all similar cases or that he simply has not yet thought his way through to a generalized position.

This ambiguity in storytelling can be a good thing when it keeps open an issue about which we do not yet have sufficient data on which to base a judgment. The anecdotal approach also can represent an evasion of the responsibility to do sustained thinking. Some people who answer general questions with concrete stories will answer a question on a specific point with an abstraction.

There are limits to the usefulness of anecdotes for the Volunteer who wishes to interpret his experience to others—and to himself.

The Peace Corps Volunteer finds himself the representative of a movement about which the most laudatory things are said by people in the highest places. It is not too much to say that a certain righteousness is attributed to the Peace Corps, a quality rarely associated with government enterprises. It has become a cliché in scholarly interpretations of the Peace Corps to suggest that it represents a secular successor to the missionary movement of earlier generations.

Missionaries first

This last comparison is reassuring to many parents but understandably disconcerting to Volunteers, especially to those who have returned from two years in former "mission lands." The missionary did anticipate the Volunteer on several important counts. Generations of patient missionary work laid the groundwork in linguistics, for example, without which the miracle of language training in the Peace Corps would be unthinkable. The motivation for that accomplishment was noble: so that the native populations might hear and read the Good News in their own vernacular. (The Volunteer has heard the gratitude of the readership expressed in such ironic epigrams as this: "When the white man came we had the land and he had the Bible; today we have the Bible and he has the land.")

The Volunteer may be tempted on occasion to be satisfied, even pleased, with the depth of acceptance he knew from host country friends and associates. But then he remembers how he used to hear missionaries home on furlough talk about "my village" or "my river." For decades those pronouns were taken to express an admirable identification of the missionary with his adopted environment; only when the indigenous inhabitants of those villages asserted themselves politically were we reminded that they are possessive pronouns.

The Volunteer learns from his ecclesiastical predecessors that sincerity of motivation is no clue to how the long-term results of his service may be judged. The missionary movement, at the very least, stood in a questionable relationship to colonialism. The intelligent returned Peace Corps Volunteer is right to wonder occasionally just how history will see his service in relation to various neocolonialisms.

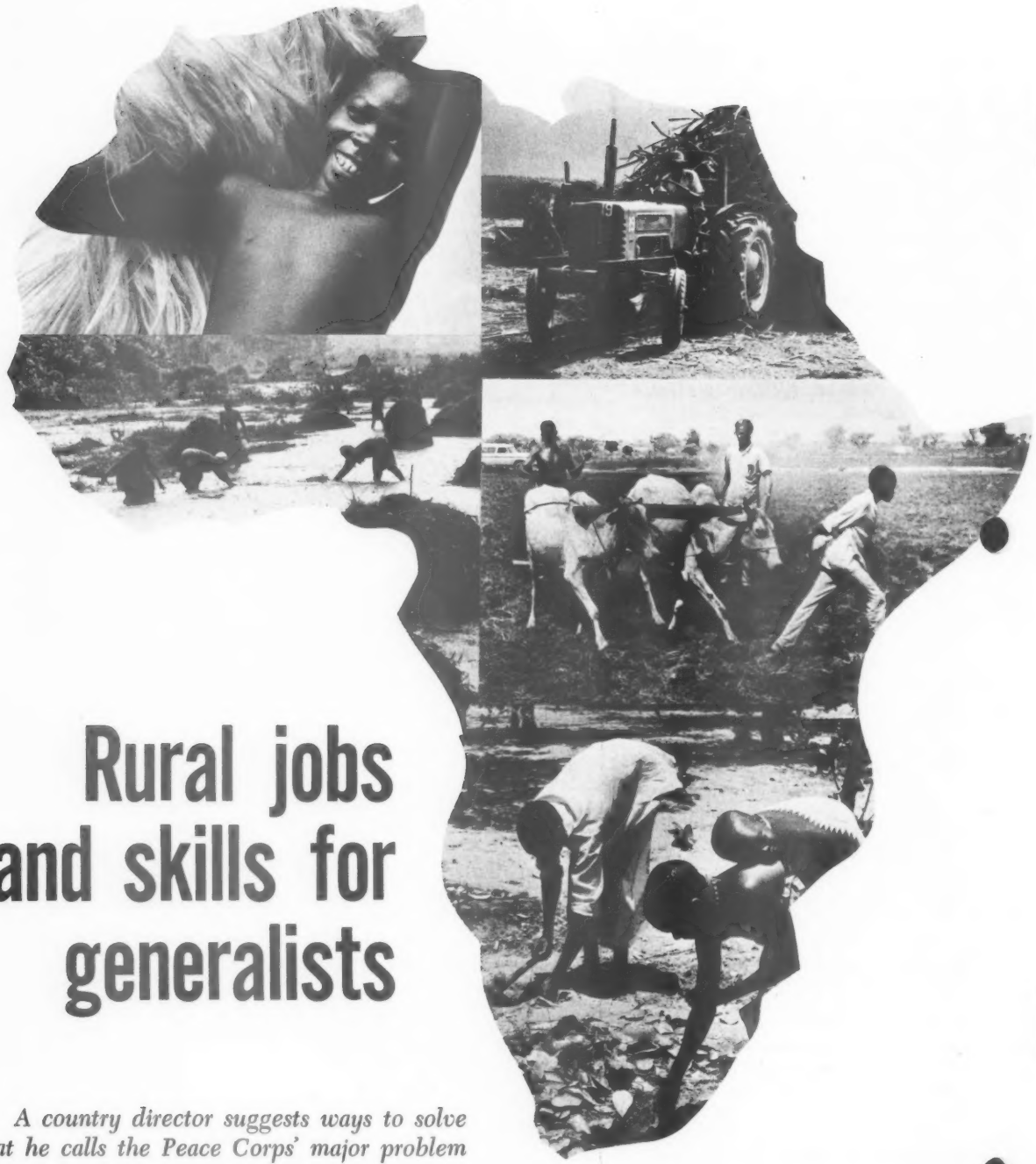
Peace Corps service, to borrow a line from a current cosmetic ad, makes the Volunteer a legend in his own time. But being a walking legend has its drawbacks. Ball players and entertainers can sign autographs. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are supposed to be able to do a bit more than that.

Rod French works on special projects for the Peace Corps Office of Public Affairs. Before joining the agency he wrote advertising copy. He is a former director of student work for the World Council of Churches.

Peace Corps postage stamps were issued recently by two nations, Liechtenstein and Tonga. Liechtenstein, a small European principality, will use part of the stamp's revenue to support the country's two-year-old Peace Corps, which now has three volunteers serving in Africa. The stamp's design features a symbol of growth, reproduced in bright greens and orange against a blue back-

ground. Halfway around the world from Liechtenstein, the island kingdom of Tonga issued a set of 14 stamps as a salute to the U.S. Peace Corps, which has 130 Volunteers working in health, education and agriculture programs there. The stamps depict island scenes, and several picture Queen Salote who ruled Tonga for more than 40 years.

By MICHAEL J. FURS



Rural jobs and skills for generalists

A country director suggests ways to solve what he calls the Peace Corps' major problem

From all indications it seems that the Peace Corps will continue and, in fact, increase its involvement in the rural economies of Africa. It also appears that the developing countries will continue to request assistance from the Peace Corps in providing middle-level manpower to fill the gaps in their rural economies. It is further assumed that the Peace Corps will continue to attract Volunteers who are primarily liberal arts graduates, referred to here as "A.B. generalists."

Thus far there has been a proliferation of projects developed by overseas staff which could be grouped under the general heading of "agricultural projects": land settlement in Kenya, agricultural cooperatives in Niger, etc. For all these projects, there has been only one common denominator, and that is the input—the Volunteer, again in the majority of cases, an A.B. generalist. We can describe the A.B. generalist assigned to agricultural projects in the following broad terms:

He is most often from an urban environment.

He is a recent graduate with little or no work experience.

His contact with rural life and agriculture in the United States has been negligible, at best.

He is quite unaware of what will be expected of him once he arrives in the host country.

He lacks confidence, particularly in the skills area.

He is given no prognostic tests by the Peace Corps which will measure his mechanical aptitude, nor a vocational interest test to determine if agriculture or rural development will satisfy him intellectually for a period of two years.

'If we continue to send overseas Volunteers who are underskilled, we endanger ourselves and the Peace Corps with serious political consequences.'

These statements, albeit only useful generalizations, are obviously the negative characteristics of the A.B. generalist; happily he also has many positive traits.

The A.B. generalist is usually an individual of high motivation, idealism, commitment and what the French Africans like to refer to as *beaucoup de bonne volonte*. So as a general rule, we have in the A.B. generalist a Volunteer who possesses *beaucoup de bonne volonte*, but is weak in skills. How, then, best to train and program this Volunteer and channel his enthusiasm into productive endeavors becomes the Peace Corps' major problem.

Overseas staff have often responded to host country requests without really taking into consideration the competency of the A.B. generalist and the Peace Corps' capacity to train him. In 1963, Guinea requested within one agriculture program six different agricultural skill categories. For the most part A.B. generalists were recruited who were trained well on how to be good Volunteers, but disastrously undertrained in the skills required for their jobs in Guinea. It was assumed that any good "red-blooded young American" coming from a highly sophisticated society could teach the peasants of the underdeveloped country something. I think this was a dangerous underestimation of the people we are dealing with in Africa. It is perhaps true that the African's horizon is not as broad as that of a person who comes from the United States or Europe. It may also be true that many Africans lack organizational skills which are more necessary for survival in the Western world. At the same time we have found that there are many well-trained agricultural technicians in Africa who at least have enough skill training that they can quickly identify an unskilled Volunteer. Furthermore, Africans have had a great deal of experience with highly skilled European agriculturalists, and these technicians, rather than other Africans, became their point of comparison.

'It is the Peace Corps' responsibility to provide the possibility to the Volunteer to become a respected and indeed an indispensable part of the development plans of the host countries.'

Unfortunately, the Guinea error has been repeated several times since 1963. Generally, agricultural programs are developed by non-agricultural staff members, either in Peace Corps Washington or overseas, by people who can no more relate to agriculture than can the A.B. generalist before training. I don't mean to imply that staff with agricultural background is immune to poor programming; in fact, I am an example of the contrary. I was also once a member of the club which had a mistaken idea of the capacity of the A.B. generalist in agriculture, which felt that the second two objectives of the Peace Corps were most important and if a Peace Corps Volunteer could fulfill these objectives adequately, he would be successful. For better or worse, we have matured since those days. We have come to realize that if in fact the first objective is adequately fulfilled, the achievement of the second two is generally automatic, provided we keep attracting the committed, motivated, and highly personal Volunteer. As many Volunteers put it: "The smile wears off after a few months; now I've got to do something."

If we continue to send overseas Volunteers who are underskilled, we endanger ourselves and the Peace Corps with serious political consequences.

The immediate needs of the underdeveloped countries of Africa are indeed middle-level manpower technicians, and we cannot afford to send overseas less than that. To claim that we do this and then not follow up on our commitments will seriously

damage the prestige of the Peace Corps and of the United States. This, in my opinion, is even more important today, in a world of escalating anti-American propaganda, a world full of detractors who rejoice at every American defeat or loss of confidence and prestige. Volunteers, spread throughout the underdeveloped world, can either lend credence to this propaganda, or be living examples of the untruth of it. It is the Peace Corps' responsibility to provide the possibility to the Volunteer to become a respected and indeed an indispensable part of the development plans of the host countries.

Now then, how can we best achieve this objective? The solution must start with overseas programming. When programming a project in agriculture, staff must keep in mind not only the host country requests, but the nature of the A.B. generalist as well.

Experience has demonstrated that it is nearly impossible to train a general agriculturist in the period of time alloted to training. A Volunteer cannot be expected, in three months, to learn enough about animal husbandry, vegetable gardening, agronomy, farm mechanics, fruit production, co-operation, etc., in addition to area studies and languages. An exposure to these fields and a sensitivity to agriculture is the best that can possibly be done in this short period of time. We must not persist in the delusion that we can train "agricultural extension agents" for Africa unless they already have an adequate agricultural background. What we can do, however, is make an attempt to program the Volunteer into a very narrow skills area. This requires research into the major problems in African agriculture.

'We must be prepared to spend the money necessary to turn an A.B. generalist into a middle-level technician in a period of three to six months. The objective should be the best training possible, and not saving money.'

Let us assume that the host country government has decided that it intends to attempt a general increase in corn and peanut production. The request for a Volunteer will most likely be for an agronomist. It is at this time that the staff must be totally candid with the host country ministry and inform it that an agronomist is impossible, but a trained agent for peanut production and corn production is indeed possible. If this host country objective is country-wide, a program can be developed around this skills area. The same might be true of cotton production or millet, coffee or cocoa production. If the Volunteer is allowed to concentrate during training on a very narrow list of skills, and becomes fairly proficient in these, he will indeed be valuable to the host country. If the host country wants to encourage animal traction as a major priority and the structure exists, a Volunteer could easily be trained in this skill within a period of three to four months.

'Programs should not be turned down by Washington on the grounds that they are too small and therefore will be too expensive to train.'

Unquestionably, an improvement of the rural economy and increased agricultural production remains the number one priority of many of the African countries. At the same time, immense problems must be overcome if the small states are to have any chance at becoming economically viable. Increasing production has a different connotation in the United States than it does in Africa. A United States farmer cannot be compared in any way to the African farmer, whose cultural methods have not, and could not have, changed over the last few centuries. A casual observer, such as a foreign technican conducting feasibility studies, will take a look at the many acres of unfarmed land in Africa, be surrounded by Africans who are subsistence farmers at best, and he will shudder in horror. Why, he will ask, don't they farm more land? Unhappily, he will often deduce that Africans are "lazy." The fact is that the simple tools available to the African and the short period of time between the first rains and planting dates preclude an extension of farm lands. Possibilities, without outside aid, of improving agricultural tools, and thereby saving human labor, simply do not exist.

'A good share of the technical training must take place in-country or at least in-continent, since there, and only there, are qualified people available and are conditions realistic.'

The technician will also recommend a variety of chemical fertilizers. After all, that's what we do in the United States. In Africa, however, the low price of crops often does not make the use of fertilizers economically possible. Furthermore, in many parts of lateritic Africa the soil is so poor in humus that commercial fertilizers will never give the desired results. Lack of markets, feeder roads, poor transport facilities are among other serious handicaps to agricultural development.

I am merely pointing out these problems in order to discourage oversimplifications or hastily mounting programs for which adequate research has not been done. To my knowledge, there is no existing development agency of any nationality, including the Peace Corps, that has not been guilty of this. Results from 20 years of

heavy investment in the rural economies of the African countries have been meager indeed.

It is for these reasons that I am recommending that the Peace Corps address itself to a limited number of problems in agriculture rather than diffusing its efforts too broadly. Some of the activities we can become involved in are cooperative organization, introduction of new crop varieties, stored grains insect control, village water supply, field research in fertilizers and insecticides, crop diversification programs, introduction and vulgarization of animal traction and tractor farming where conditions permit, and introduction of new crops. However, each of the above possibilities should be treated as a separate entity, depending on host country requirements and priorities. The use of A.B. generalists lends itself to any of these, provided that certain factors exist, the most important being a host country infrastructure and adequate financing from whatever source. We should no longer honor the requests from host country ministries or overseas staff which don't have these two ingredients, structure and financing. Parachuting a Volunteer into a remote village and expecting him to "develop" has proven to be an unproductive endeavor.

To approach the agriculture Volunteer's job from this point of view may cost the Peace Corps more money. As training becomes more specialized, it will be more expensive. The standard university training will not be adequate. We will have to move toward in-house training, and move away from the academic approach toward a "learn by doing" approach. I am convinced that a Volunteer can be trained to manipulate oxen in a short period of time, he can be trained to carry out basic agricultural research, he can be trained to control grain weevils. If the skill is more complicated, the Peace Corps should be prepared to lengthen training up to six months; even at the expense of the length of overseas service. A poorly trained Peace Corps Volunteer will not contribute in 24 months overseas what a well-trained Volunteer will contribute in 18 months.

We have continued to make the mistake of believing that any good American university can train agricultural Volunteers, at any time. The cost factors have generally dictated our action, but, in my opinion, to the detriment of the Peace Corps. I find little sound reasoning in training a group for tropical Africa in New England during the winter. Neither Louisiana, nor Florida, nor California can come close to exposing Volunteers to the problems of tropical agriculture. In my opinion, a good share of the technical training must take place in-country or at least in-continent, since there, and only there, are qualified people available and are conditions realistic. Africa does indeed have well-qualified agricultural technicians, and we should make every effort to make use of them.

The selection process for Volunteers in agriculture and rural development must become more sophisticated and refined. Many Volunteers committed to this work for two years are neither psychologically nor technically qualified. There are some in the rural community development group in Togo at the present time who cannot pound a nail, nor have they any other mechanical aptitude. Only Volunteers who can be positively predicted to be able to adapt to small village life should be selected. Admittedly, errors in selection will continue, but they should be held to a minimum. Being forced to make a change in the work situation of the Peace Corps Volunteer overseas can be embarrassing for the Peace Corps.

Thus far, I have dealt primarily with the A.B. generalist who accepts invitation for purely agricultural projects. Rural development is another field, related to agriculture, but broader in its scope, where an A.B. generalist can contribute greatly, and function quite effectively.

A rural development agent does not need a specialized agricultural skill. A concentrated course in the agriculture of the area where he will work should be sufficient. What is more important is that he learn the intricacies of cross-cultural approaches, some basic economics of underdevelopment, anthropology, cultural sensitivity, and methods of basic research and observation techniques.

A rural development project can be particularly successful if the host country has well-developed agricultural services or if other development organizations are active in the area. When this situation exists, the Volunteer can become the liaison agent between the village and all the services available to help that village join the twentieth century. He becomes the village lawyer, the stimulus to get the public works man out to survey a

'We must not persist in the delusion that we can train agricultural extension agents for Africa unless they already have an agricultural background.'

'The Peace Corps (should) address itself to a limited number of problems in agriculture rather than diffusing its efforts too broadly.'

'We should no longer honor the requests from host country ministries or overseas staff which don't have these two ingredients: structure and financing.'

road; the doctor to advise the health services; the livestock man to diagnose the disease which killed the goat.

At the same time, the rural community development agent observes and suggests and listens. He has made it clear to the villagers that he is not a technician, but that he knows how to find advice and that it is his job to help them get answers.

The Volunteer has at the same time the opportunity to conduct economic, social and cultural surveys, and to collect information vital to further economic development.

It is also believed that villages where rural agents have been active are more apt to accept other outside agricultural technicians, the rural agent having broken the ice.

In closing, I would like to make the following recommendations for consideration and discussion:

Agricultural and rural development projects should be developed in the field.

Programs should not be turned down by Washington on the grounds that they are too small and therefore will be too expensive to train. The magic number 30, now used as a guideline for mounting programs in West Africa, is unrealistic and will contribute to destroying highly productive projects.

We must be prepared to spend the money necessary to turn an A.B. generalist into a middle-level technician in a period of three to six months. The objective should be the best training possible, and not saving money. In the long run, the taxpayer stands to lose far more by sending overseas a poorly trained and incompetent Volunteer.

A more concentrated effort must be made to recruit agricultural staff for agricultural programs. No agricultural or rural development program should be allowed to function overseas without technical backstopping of Volunteers by a Peace Corps staff member or a full-time contract technician from another agency, foreign or domestic.

Where no other financing is available and a project is deemed to be valuable and in the interest of the host country and the Peace Corps, the Peace Corps should be prepared to provide its own financing. In countries where AID is no longer active, this factor becomes essential if the Peace Corps wishes to continue to function in areas other than education.

Selection of A.B. generalists for agriculture and rural community development must be done carefully and accurately. We must cease being obsessed with numbers. If a program requests 30 Volunteers and only half that number can be found to meet the requirements, only 15 should go into training. The program should neither be scrapped nor filled with "bodies." I am pleading for quality over quantity, even at higher costs.

The Peace Corps should move toward in-house training sites, particularly for agricultural skills training. Some programs must extend training up to six months, an impossibility on most university campuses. Split training, partially on a campus, the rest at the Peace Corps site, domestically or in-country, would be a compromise to satisfy our public relations and recruiting needs.

Michael J. Furst has been a Peace Corps staff member in West Africa for the past four years, first in Guinea and more recently in Togo, where he has been country director for the past two years. He previously taught agronomy and horticulture in California high schools. This article was adapted from a presentation he made at a meeting of Africa country directors.

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Statistics from compl[illegible]n of

The ideal st

He is controversial and elusive. Indeed, he may never be found.

But thousands of Volunteers keep looking for him.

Conference reports have indicated that more than half of all Volunteers have some kind of problem with staff.

In trying to pin down these problems, terminating Volunteers often start out discussions on staff by panning or praising the staff people they have known. Then they end up [illegible] scribing the staff they think sho[illegible] exist.

This composite of the ideal Peace Corps staff person was drawn by THE VOLUNTEER from conference reports from the years 1963, 1965 and 1967. The combined qualities and characteristics cited by Volunteers make the ideal staff man, the all-around rep.

(Incidentally, if any reader knows this man, please refer him to Peace Corps Talent Search).

He is a chief, not a buddy. Volunteers want firm, consistent, available leadership—but the evocative kind, not the directive. Only in the beginning of a Volunteer's service should a staff member ever direct.

He adjusts easily, is almost chameleon-like in his ability to adapt to each new group of Volunteers and to constantly re-examine his objectives and those of the Peace Corps.

He is a skilled humanist. He listens well and shows an honest concern for Volunteers' problems and their programs. A Volunteer could go to him easily; he never discusses one Volunteer's problems with another.

...n of ...vice conferences describe

...l staff member

He helps Volunteers understand what is happening to them. He supports, but never coddles.

He is a handy man to the Volunteer on the job. He is aware of what a Volunteer is doing and offers constructive criticism on how to do it better.

He is a channel through which Volunteers can exchange ideas and information. Volunteers can depend upon him for analysis and feedback on their work.

He knows the country, the people and the culture well. He has the personal knowledge of sites, agency and community leaders to enable him to set up "good" Volunteer sites and to smooth the way for the Volunteer entering the community.

He is a strong link between Volunteers and host country officials and agencies. He speaks the language, hobnobs easily with officials of local society. He helps Volunteers establish meaningful relationships with their respective agencies and is ready to trouble-shoot for the Volunteers as necessary.

He is a good administrator. He is not a messenger boy, but delivers supplies when necessary; more importantly, knows where they are and how to get them. He has an understanding of policies on allowances, travel, vehicles, social behavior, etc., and can interpret Peace Corps Washington idiosyncrasies to bewildered and irate Volunteers. He need not support these policies, however.

He is a frequent visitor, and stays awhile when he comes. The "flying visit" or the "one-day flash" are taboo. He is prepared to remain several days to find out what's going on.

He stays put in the country—for at least two years. Too much staff turnover destroys program continuity, and there is nothing worse than a staff member who doesn't know what's happening in the country. (A six-week "quickie" course in language, technical skills, geography and psychology for staff members who have to find out what's happening fast is one recommendation.)

He has the "Peace Corps spirit;" he "talks Peace Corps."

He is intellectually stimulating.

He does not demand too many visible, tangible accomplishments.

Finally, he is quadruplets.

'A series of episodes'

THE PEACE CORPS EXPERIENCE. *Edited by Roy Hoopes. Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., New York. 320 pages. $6.95.*

By JAMES P. HERZOG

The Peace Corps is as established in the American mind as the hot dog, the hamburger and the Salvation Army. Thousands have served, thousands more are serving, and thousands still are being recruited every month. It's a rough and tumble thing, the Peace Corps is. Often it's "two years in an isolated village in the mountains, or lost in a teeming city slum . . ."

Despite the harshness, despite the perversity, it is "the greatest eye-opening, mind-stretching education any generation of Americans has ever had."

This is how Roy Hoopes sees the Peace Corps in the introduction to *The Peace Corps Experience*, an anthology of writings by Volunteers and ex-Volunteers. The writings are edited by Mr. Hoopes and presented with 350 photographs.

As a serious study of what the Peace Corps has been up to, Mr. Hoopes' work is deficient. It falls prey to the natural tendency to idolize the "hair-shirt," the unusual, and actual accomplishments. The 350 photographs portray action but fail to personify the Peace Corps.

Most highlights of the Peace Corps' past, present and future are at least superficially treated in Mr. Hoopes' commentary.

Mr. Hoopes' wide-ranging introduction dashes through Peace Corps history. He credits William James with the inspiration for a volunteer corps. In 1910 James asked that American youth be "drafted . . . to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dishwashing, clothes-washing and window-washing, to road-building. . . ." James thought a universal draft would help change America's "gilded" youth.

The Peace Corps rested contentedly in non-birth for some 50 years, until Congressman Henry Reuss (D.-Wisc.) began pushing the idea of "young men and young women serving abroad in the cause of peace." In late summer, 1960, the Kennedy campaign organization adopted the Peace Corps idea from Congressman Reuss and various service organizations.

Once in office, President Kennedy kept his campaign promise. The President, says Hoopes, had to withstand "the hoots of derision," which came from such sources as the Daughters of the American Revolution, columnists and *The Wall Street Journal*, among others.

Soon, however, Sargent Shriver was doing everything but chopping down cherry trees, collecting "a bright, energetic, and alert group of young men." The great experiment was begun, and in late August, 1961, the first group of Volunteers went to Ghana to teach in secondary schools. They arrived singing a song in Twi and were rated a great success.

This is a romantic story, and it is slightly sobered by Mr. Hoopes' paragraph about Peace Corps failures: "The Peace Corps was asked to leave some countries, and in others the programs were disappointing if not downright failures," wrote the editor. But in the context of Mr. Hoopes' other remarks, this is hard to believe.

Disappointments received but a paragraph and were sandwiched between the passage of the Peace Corps Act and an account of the world's sadness vis-a-vis Volunteers on November 23, 1963.

All this success. What does it mean? "The Peace Corps today, after less than seven years' operation . . . is a solid, established idea . . ."

With the tone of the anthology set by this all-glorious introduction, the brief, sometimes colorful and sometimes inarticulate writings of about 30 Volunteers fit the work—as they were chosen to do.

Almost all 30 authors have published their passages before, many on the pages of THE VOLUNTEER. It can be said with safety that these works have the air of authenticity and accuracy—but no soul. In an age stimulated by Holden Caufields, Yossarians and Saul Bellows, everyone wants to know what's happening inside people and not outside. These writers, however, manage only to convey superficial descriptions and criticisms of their life in the Peace Corps.

Mr. Hoopes has declared the Peace Corps "a mind-stretching" success, but the anthology is no particular example of anything but "ranges of experience" being stretched. It is Peace Corps work—its successes and even failures—that is treated here, not what goes on in the Volunteer's mind.

Certainly, however, there are enough colorful experiences to make this book a treat for the family back in Iowa or for the children.

There's one-time farmer Moritz Thomsen, who joined the Peace Corps in his thirties. He wrote about training:

"In all three phases of our training, we were studied and appraised like a bunch of fat beeves about to be entered in the State Fair. . . . The doctor and his nurse watched us; our discussion leaders watched us; our athletic coaches watched us. And even the kitchen help watched us."

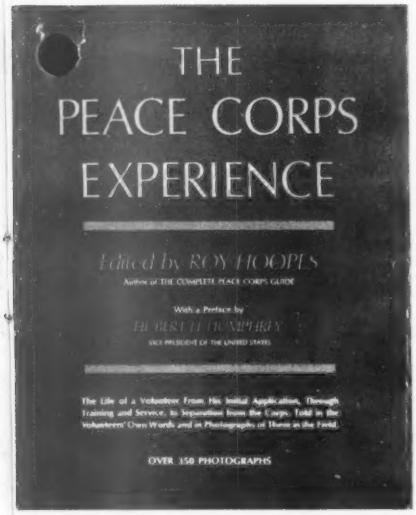
Then there's typical Volunteer Roymond Brodeur, who was a star relief pitcher for a Venezuelan prison baseball team. He writes a good story—not one important to *The Peace Corps Experience* but good enough to be in a sports anthology: Brodeur describes the prison sports announcer as the local "Mel Allen." This announcer, recounts Brodeur, "possessing an enormous imagination and a great love of his own voice, has matter-of-factly blatted that I played three years with the Pittsburgh Pirates as a pitcher and shortstop. . . . He increased my age by fourteen years when he said I fought in World War II. He also mentioned I was a personal friend of the late President Kennedy."

There are a series of episodes about community development. Projects and accomplishments are tersely explained: there was William Krohley's barrio, where the mud was drained off the roads. And Edward Chiera's barrio organized itself by selling raffle tickets and spending money to purchase drugs and a medicine cabinet.

Then the agriculturalists: school gardens, nurseries, cooperatives . . .

And public health . . . and even the miscellaneous: like the life of a Peace Corps secretary.

Finally a chapter, "Peace Corps Life—And After." The guts of the Peace Corps experience? No, it is Charles Kratz, reporting from the Philippines on variations in Volunteer


THE
PEACE CORPS
EXPERIENCE
Edited by ROY HOOPES
Author of THE COMPLETE PEACE CORPS GUIDE
With a Preface by
HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
The Life of a Volunteer From His Initial Application, Through Training and Service, to Separation from the Corps. Told in the Volunteers' Own Words and in Photographs of Them in the Field.
OVER 350 PHOTOGRAPHS

Two myths almost meet

By STUART AWBREY

One of the greatest legends held outside the Peace Corps is that it is full of heroes. One of the greatest legends inside the Peace Corps is that there are no heroes. This book brings the two legends closer to reality than any other that has been published to date.

This is no small undertaking. One characteristic of the Peace Corps is that a tale is never quite true unless it happens to oneself. If every Volunteer sat down at the end of a given day and wrote an essay on "What I Did Today," there would be many similarities in content, if not in style. Yet few of the essays would ring true to another Volunteer. The experience is too personal to be defined by somebody else, even the Volunteer in the next town, or the one next door.

That condition makes *The Peace Corps Experience* vulnerable right away. Here is a bold title that asserts that there is something more universal in the Peace Corps than Polymagma. And a subtitle promises to tell about "the life of the Volunteer, from his initial application, through training and service, to separation from the Corps." This is definitive—it is the stuff from which images are made. With 350 photographs and 28 personal articles, it is the "image" itself, if you use that kind of mirror.

The book succeeds because the images it projects are anything but monolithic. The wide diversity of photographs and prose excludes a singular vision of "The Experience." Super Volunteer, a legendary anti-hero that some Peace Corps mothers write about, is lurking down there somewhere, but a reader has to look very hard to find him (maybe in the photo captions).

At one time he might have been Tom Clark, a Volunteer in Chimbote, Peru, who opens his article in *The Peace Corps Experience* simply—"Let me tell you about what I do down here"—and proceeds to tell about his urban community development work. At the end, he says, "A really good Peace Corps program receives little credit. Keep this in mind when you read Peace Corps success stories."

When he wrote this several years ago, few of us (including Tom Clark) would have thought that this article was itself a "success story." The writer told of some of the problems of his site, too, and as the famous advertisement told us, progress was not easily measured in his city, Chimbote.

In the earlier years, especially, "success story" was a widely employed term of derision which was perceived as a prime contributor to a familiar bugaboo, "The Image." To counter "success story," an Iran newsletter advertised for "failure anecdotes." Few Volunteers ventured forth to recite their failures, but many thought the idea was a good one, if only someone else would do it. At that time the editors of THE VOLUNTEER labored, with some accomplishment, to juxtapose "failure stories" with "success stories." The big push was to tell it the way it really was, whatever it was. Volunteer reaction to some of the published failures was often strident—these reports served to reinforce suspicions that Peace Corps selection was sending ineffective people overseas.

The problem for the Volunteers, and ultimately for the Peace Corps, was that they were writing (and reading) exposition. The answer to "What I Did Today" is invariably framed in descriptive prose; this is the easiest composition. The resulting vignettes, frequently the product of narrow experiences, led to some narrow definitions. The problem was not in the "success" or "failure" of a particular Volunteer but in his tendency to describe, like Tom Clark did, rather than interpret and analyze his success or failure.

Many of the articles in *The Peace Corps Experience* are indeed descriptive, which does not detract from the book. Roy Hoopes has selected some of the best exposition, including two articles by the "Ambassador in Levis," Moritz Thomsen, a farmer who has demonstrated talents in expression through periodic newspaper contributions from Ecuador; the report from Vicki Soucek and Nancy Keith in Niger, and some shorter stories.

But we also have the interpreters, the analysts, even the critics. There is Brooke Baker, the disgruntled architect, taking on the Peace Corps for faulty programming of professionals.

housing. And Gary Engelberg and Judy Nordblom, hashing over the city vs. the sticks.

Somehow, after all this, Mr. Hoopes presented us with a Volunteer who felt, sensed and thought through his experience. No other writer in *The Peace Corps Experience* caught the "mind-stretching" import better than David Schickele. This early-day Nigeria Volunteer wrote:

"Before going to Africa I read another book by Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*. I enjoyed it and was glad to learn something about Ibo culture, but I thought it a mediocre work of art. I read the work again at the end of my stay in Nigeria, and suddenly found it an exceptional work of art. It was no longer a cultural document, but a book about trees I had climbed and houses I had visited in. It is not that I now ignored artistic defects through sentimentality, but that my sympathy revealed artistic virtues that had previously been hidden from me."

And to bind all the memories together, to put everything into brilliant perspective, Mr. Hoopes chooses Dr. Maurice L. Sill's famous four stages of Peace Corps life (transculturation).

James P. Herzog is a VOLUNTEER *correspondent in Tunisia. A newspaper reporter before he joined the Peace Corps, he has an M.S. in journalism from Columbia University.*

Examining the crucial area of urban work with him are Gary Engelberg in Dakar and Judith Nordblom, who generalizes from her experience in Addis Ababa. Carole Watkins treats difficulties peculiar to nurses in the Peace Corps. After a year back home, Samuel Abbott critically dissects his preparation and performance as a teacher, concluding that "the question is not what a Volunteer must do, but what he must be to serve." Finally, as the last chapter of the book, there is the notable study of the cross-cultural experience by David Schickele, "When the Right Hand Washes the Left," which ranks as one of the great Peace Corps papers.

Only one article by a staff person appears. It is Maurice Sill's study of "Transculturation," which is a sort of halfway house from the early-day nursings of Dr. Joseph English on the psychological adjustments of Volunteer life. With more data becoming available, one would hope for a more scientific approach than English or Sill has managed.

Graphically, the Peace Corps is one of the most fascinating institutions in the world, as this volume demonstrates. A few of the photographs were made by Volunteers and staff members, but the bulk of the 350 photographs are the work of the Peace Corps professionals: Rowland Scherman, Paul Conklin, and Carl Purcell. The editor had access to their art and made the most of it, compiling the best photographic record of the Peace Corps to be found in one volume.

As a book of record, there had to be a chapter on history, which begins with William James' "Army of Peace" proposal and ends with a perceptive quotation from a Volunteer who could be summing up the Peace Corps at age seven. He writes: "Our original excitement and enthusiasm have been somewhat tempered by a year here. We have come to realize that change comes so slowly that progress, if it comes at all, seems imperceptible. The eagerness is replaced by colder ways of looking at the world, and the youthful vigor and idealism become hardened with a day-to-day job. We can never again become the people we were before we came to Africa. But then, we would not want to."

Stuart Awbrey was editor of THE VOLUNTEER *for more than two years. Last month he became deputy director of the Peace Corps Office of Public Information.*

New program teaches la

Language learning will receive more emphasis in this year's training programs than ever before in Peace Corps history. Starting this spring, all trainees will spend their first four weeks of training entirely on the study of language.

As part of a new high-intensity training technique devised by the Peace Corps, trainees in their first month of training will study language in class for a minimum of eight hours a day, six days a week. No class will have more than six students. Outside the classroom, trainees will participate in language-oriented activities, and will be expected to communicate only in the language they are studying. Other training components, such as cross-cultural studies, will be introduced during the first month only when the content fits into a language-learning situation.

Hours in class during this high-intensity month will total about 200, two-thirds of the 300-hour minimum set by the Peace Corps for language training two years ago. The remaining 100 hours of required study will be spread throughout the remainder of the training program. Instruction will comprise a minimum of three hours a day during the week, with more as needed. In some cases, trainess may receive up to a total of 500 hours of language training.

Variations of the new language technique were tested in eight training programs last summer and fall. Director Jack Vaughn found the results so encouraging he is making high-intensity language training a Peace Corps policy.

"We have found," said Vaughn, "that some Volunteers learn to speak a language in four weeks as well as many of the college majors do after four years. And many more speak that well after 12 weeks."

Last fall's Lesotho training group, which used the high-intensity technique, is an example. Sixty-four per cent of the trainees achieved a Foreign Service Institute S-2 rating in Sesotho at the close of their 12-week training period. An S-2 indicates a "limited working proficiency," the phrase the U.S. Office of Education recently used to describe the speaking ability acquired after four years by the average American college student majoring in a foreign language.

Allan Kulakow, director of Peace Corps language training, is also pleased with the results of the language experimentation.

"Even though the nature of the program was intense, demanding—a saturation, almost, of language—most of the trainees maintained their enthusiasm," he said.

"This high-intensity early training appears especially good for trainees with average language aptitude," he continued, "and those who are already proficient to some degree can achieve their language requirement quickly and move on to a second language or skill training."

Kulakow conducted a study on t summer experimental programs which concludes that the trainee with average language aptitude does appear to benefit the most from high-intensity, early training. In some cases, high-intensity training helped boost average aptitude trainees to the speaking level of trainees with high aptitude who did

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s language faster

not participate in high-intensity training. Additionally, the training was found to be a significant contribution to an entire group's language achievement, as measured at the end of training. That is, of two groups with the same total number of training hours, the one with the higher proportion of high-intensity training scored a higher level of achievement.

Among the high aptitude trainees, however, the study showed there was no major difference in achievement between those with high-intensity training and those without. The study concludes that success for high aptitude language learners is probably not as dependent on a particular method of language instruction as it is for the average aptitude learner.

The study also noted that, as in past training programs, the higher a trainee's initial proficiency, the smaller his gain seemed to be during training. In the high-intensity programs, however, this gain was achieved more rapidly. An even higher level of achievement for the high proficiency trainee would require more advanced materials and a consistent methodology geared to his special needs.

Trainee interest in and anxiety about language learning was high during high-intensity training, the study revealed. The very existence of a special program for language seemed to emphasize its importance for the trainees.

The most popular aspects of the program with trainees were small classes, rotation of teachers, and the emphasis on speaking. Trainees were pleased with the visible and rapid progress they made. Among the least popular aspects of the program were the exhaustive pace and the beginners' frustration at not being able to communicate.

Most trainees enthusiastically endorsed the program, and many said they thought it should be longer.

The Peace Corps will seek to encourage high motivation among 1968 trainees by explaining, early in the program, the goals and expectations of the high-intensity month. An initial orientation period will also acquaint trainees with their country of assignment and their Peace Corps role.

What the language study calls one of the most important aspects of high-intensity programs—the "motivating force" provided by enthusiastic and dedicated language instructors and staff—may be the most difficult element to provide this year.

The new Peace Corps language technique is unlike any other intensive language training used by any other agencies and institutions in the language teaching business, says Sharon Van Cleve, Peace Corps language consultant. The demands on staff will be great. Instructors will be expected to work long hours, in and out of the classroom.

The need for variety in teaching methods places another demand upon language staff. Scheduling, classroom techniques, outside activities: all must be varied and flexible, as well as highly relevant.

Finally, language instructors involved in the high-intensity programs will often find themselves in isolated training locations, deliberately chosen to prevent distraction from the language learning task.

The Peace Corps plans to authorize the hiring of additional language staff, and higher salaries, as necessary. In addition, the agency has already held one methods workshop for language coordinators, and plans to conduct two more during the year.

In addition to the obvious benefit of increased language proficiency, the Peace Corps sees other advantages in the early speaking facility provided by high-intensity programs. Among these are a fuller integration of language with other training components which follow; more effective preparation of trainees headed for in-country training; and the provision of uninterrupted blocks of time necessary to intensify the teaching of other components, such as skill training.

Drawn by Upper Volta Volunteer Norman Skougstad during training at Dartmouth

Each trainee was asked to come to the front of the auditorium to pick up a paper cup of water and . . . an "instant-language" . . . pill. (The pills were placebos ordered from the local pharmacy.) Each trainee was asked to introduce himself . . . and to vow in French . . . to speak only in French . . . or in one of the African languages he was to study. After this ritual, the trainees were asked to raise their cups in a toast to success, take the pill, and drink the water. They were then told to crumple their paper cups, raise them over their heads and smash them—and their inhibitions along with them—to the floor.

—A scene from an official reception of trainees about to begin their high-intensity language study at Dartmouth last summer, described by language training director John A. Rassias in his final report.

LETTERS TO THE VOLUNTEER

On culture shock

To THE VOLUNTEER:

Fred Englander ("Seeing America afresh," October) says: "I had termed actions of my colleagues as 'irresponsible, lazy and wasteful.' But I had used these words to characterize behavior in another culture as though it were behavior in my own. I had not taken cultural context into consideration, and made judgments I was not qualified to make." Go my son, and sin no more. I can see Peace Corps Washington in ecstasy. Look, look, look, a humble Volunteer who has gained from his Peace Corps Experience.

If Fred thought his colleagues' actions were 'lazy, irresponsible and wasteful,' they probably were. I see no reason for trying to justify 'lazy, irresponsible and wasteful actions' behind a semantic shield of sociological jargon.

Onward to *culture shock*. I, too, have recently been back to the States, but only for two weeks, and after hearing all about culture shock all through training and not having experienced it after two years in Nigeria, I figured that there was no escaping it now. I'm sorry to say that I wasn't overawed or shocked. It was just like being away for two weeks. Nothing had changed. I noticed a preponderance of new cars and there weren't any donkies walking blissfully down the highway. When I picked up a telephone, it worked, but I expected it would work. It was just the way it had always been and I really would have been shocked if it hadn't worked. I saw and used my first push-button telephone at home, just as if I had always used push-button telephones.

It seems to me quite obvious that there is a great cultural difference between New York and living in a walled city in northern Nigeria; also that language is a means of communication that must be understood in its "cultural context." Why all this fuss? The only conclusion I see is that a lot of Volunteers have lived in extremely small worlds back home and if they want a culture shock, all they have to do is go to New York, Chicago or San Francisco. The biggest culture shock I have gone through has not been in Nigeria, or returning to New York after two years —it was training in Kalamazoo.

JOHN T. COLLINS

Zaria, Nigeria

Have PCVs changed?

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I disagree with the generalized and off-centered presentation of Mr. David Berlew (November, "The high art of staff leadership).

The following statement is a dangerous generalization and differs sharply with the understanding that I have of Peace Corps Volunteers: ". . . In contrast to the thoughtful, committed Volunteer of 1962 and 1963, the average recruit of 1967 is unformed and unsure about the Peace Corps and his role in it." How long would the Peace Corps have continued after 1963 without "the thoughtful, committed Volunteer?" Mr. Berlew seems to support two contrasting views when he states, "In my opinion, most Peace Corps staff members have an oversimplified view of Volunteer motivation. Most Volunteers are very highly motivated to be just the kind of Volunteers we want them to be." Just what kind of Volunteer is in the field today? The "unformed and unsure" or the "very highly motivated?"

It is my opinion that the article lessens the role of the Volunteer while raising that of staff. When are we going to learn that we all enter the Peace Corps with similar motivations and that possibly through the following bases of operation can effectively contribute together to the program and country we work in? Based upon my experience, a combination of ingredients which provides for effective communication between Volunteers and staff includes:

Mutual knowledge of each other.

Common understanding of goals and purposes.

Full and open discussion of approaches.

Working in common effort.

A relationship based not upon the idea that staff *leads*, but that staff *supports* the Volunteer.

A relationship that is based upon a belief that we can all learn from each other.

Much can be learned from the Volunteer which will lead towards greater effectiveness on the part of staff. Thinking of the "average recruit" as "unformed and unsure" is certainly not a sound base for "The high art of staff leadership."

JOHN G. ANDERSON

Bhopal, India

(The writer identifies himself as a "thoughtful, committed Volunteer of 1963" and as a former Peace Corps recruiter. He is now a regional deputy director in Madhya Pradesh.)

A suggested ad

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I have become surfeited on the bitch-grumble-bitch syndrome that is affecting so many Volunteers, as evidenced by the articles and letters which appear in your magazine.

My answer to them comes in the form of an advertisement, directed toward people who are looking for what the Peace Corps has to offer. It is prompted by apparent misunderstandings created by earlier ads. The copy reads:

> "This organization can guarantee you an exciting place in which to perform a job that may or may not be dull, and which may or may not be important, depending entirely upon the way you feel.
>
> "We can guarantee you little more than that, although we can guarantee you the right to quit that job, feeling those feelings, in those surroundings, if and when it becomes impossible for you to perform such a job due to your own inadequacies or to certain government policies or organizational rulings (which are clarified before becoming committed to such a job) which may or may not affect your performance of such a job.

"And, if you are interested in applying for such a job, and training with this organization for such a job, we will consider your application carefully. And, if you are not a refugee from irresponsibility, we would be glad to arrange such a job for you.

"At no time does this organization require that you *like* such a job (if this should be your case). We only ask that you *do* such a job. And though we prefer that you do such a job *well*, we really only ask that you do such a job as best you can. And if you cannot do such a job well or as best, we only ask that you do not blame our organization."

PRISCILLA CLARK

Amazonia, Brazil

Times affect motives

To THE VOLUNTEER:

If Volunteers of today are "less thoughtful and committed than those of 1962-1963," I'm sure Mr. Berlew would be the first to admit we are no less committed to ourselves. It's more difficult to be resolved in quite the same way now. The nation is not reaching out for a morally right commitment as it so willingly sought to do after John Kennedy's inaugural and Birmingham and Selma. Today these motivations are suppressed and supplanted by a war that causes more confusion than patriotism, and by a fear that we can no longer do justice to our own society, let alone govern it.

Now, however, just as it was then, the basic force of involvement is rooted in an individual's search for his own definitions and personal values. If there is less of a social consensus to identify this search with, then the process of internalizing the justifications for joining is all the more difficult. None of us becomes a successful Volunteer, by any definition, until at some point those justifications become norms compatible with goals we hold both for our work and ourselves.

In the end, the staff member can only hope that the Volunteer finds answers honest to himself.

DARRELL DEARBORN

Ho, Ghana

Memorandum

TO : The field DATE: March, 1968
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Feedback received and requested

A new editor: Stuart Awbrey, editor of THE VOLUNTEER for the past two years, has left the magazine to become deputy director of the Peace Corps Office of Public Information. He is succeeded by Pat Brown, who has served as the magazine's associate editor for two and a half years. Miss Brown holds an A.B. degree in journalism from Indiana University. She was a Volunteer in Colombia during 1964-65. Nancy McKay continues as editorial assistant.

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It's our bag: THE VOLUNTEER has contributed directly to progress in Nepal, reports program officer Ed Metzler. The shopkeepers in Kathmandu usually wrap their goods in flimsy Nepali newsprint. During a recent trip to the bazaar, however, Metzler noticed that at least one shopkeeper —a candy salesman—had switched to a finer paper—pages from old issues of THE VOLUNTEER. An inspection beneath the counter of the stall revealed a stack of bags, all neatly constructed with glue and VOLUNTEERS. Where did the shopkeeper get them? Metzler says the man "would only reply, *'Malai thaha chhaina,'* which means he didn't know, but might be translated that he didn't want to tell me." A sample bag bore this headline: "Volunteers as agents for development."

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Bolivia Volunteer Hal Gershman thinks something important was left out of his training program. He would dub the missing component—a course in dental work—"Extraction of Gold Teeth at Funerals." Gershman was handed a pair of pliers at a recent funeral and asked to perform such a task on the deceased. He felt at a complete loss.

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Quotable quote: Of her Peace Corps service, one enthusiastic young woman recently proclaimed: "I wouldn't trade this experience for all the lovers in the world."

□ □ □

Former Volunteer Sam Stokes is the country director for the new Peace Corps program in Dahomey. Another former volunteer, Cellen Gaspoz of Switzerland, heads the Swiss volunteer program in the same country.

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How effective are footlockers? Travel officers want to know if the wood lockers introduced last June have been adequate in size, design and durability, and how well they have served for storage and safe keeping of personal effects. Also, officers would like to know how promptly unaccompanied freight is being delivered to sites. Comments may be addressed to Volunteer Travel, Office of Volunteer Support, Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525.

One-year tour proposed

To THE VOLUNTEER:

Sometime back, I read with some amusement and surprise about a 12-month Peace Corps assignment. Now, with 17 months overseas, the idea doesn't sound so radical.

With Peace Corps Washington advocating longer periods overseas (in India, in-country time has been extended from 21 to 24 months, plus two months in-country training. Total time in India—26 months) I think the advantages of this "extension" should be balanced with the disadvantages, letting the conclusions speak for themselves.

The myth that a Volunteer is more productive after 12 months in the country, and that he is, therefore, better equipped (language, skill, etc.) to contribute something to that country is a little bit too pat, too easy to believe. Too often the Volunteer, instead of blasting off into the world of achievements after 12 months, runs out of gas.

True, he has the potential and experience and knowledge to become a better Volunteer in the sense that he has "been around and knows the score." At the same time, his superenthusiasm has been cooled, and if he is perceptive and honest with himself, he knows the limitations of what he can or can't do. This doesn't necessarily mean that he is "disenchanted, angry, or cynical," although it may. If the Volunteer has the stuff in him, he normally accepts the limitations and works with the system. Some do. Some don't.

What I'm trying to say is that there is a "diminishing return" on productivity and that extending service in countries like India may not be too wise. Granted, there are exceptions, and of course, it depends on the work you do.

Maybe a 12-month tour with the option to extend from 6 to 12 months would be better.

LARRY HAYES

Madras, India

National service agency

To THE VOLUNTEER:

To Bob Malikin (November) and others who have contributed to the debate on national service in recent months, I should like to report that a national service organization does exist. Among our Advisory Board members well known in the Peace Corps are Bill Coffin, Bill Josephson, Margaret Mead, Bill Saltonstall, Harold Taylor, Don Wilson and Harris Wofford.

We conducted conferences on national service in 1966 and 1967, submitted a national service plan to the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service (to be published soon) and issue a monthly *Newsletter*.

Our address is National Service Secretariat, 1629 K St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006. We should be happy to hear from Peace Corps Volunteers.

DONALD J. EBERLY
Executive Director

Washington, D. C.

For 'gentleman's agreement'

To THE VOLUNTEER:

It is a long time now since the gentleman's agreement was over. Peace Corps men are now as draftable as anyone else or probably more so, since their age puts them right at the top of the list upon completion of service. No longer do Selective Service boards quietly pass by the names of former Peace Corps Volunteers, calculating that they have already served their country.

The Peace Corps never wanted to be an alternate to military service and in the present situation it certainly isn't. Yet this self-sacrificing attitude has its negative side, one that is currently being felt.

One reason that Peace Corps applications have dropped 30 per cent in the last year is that a college graduate is hesitant to spend two years in the Peace Corps, to be followed with at least another two-year hitch in the army. Not only does the four years seem like too long a time to sacrifice, it is also the change from the individualistic Peace Corps life to the "follow the leader" army life that is less than appealing. This is not to mention that a prospective Volunteer realizes he will develop peace goals for two years, then have to do an about-face and accept the goals of war. We are encouraged to be flexible, but I think this is asking too much.

The Peace Corps has always had a big appeal to youth because it offered a lot. What was offered was undefined and unmeasurable, therefore, ultimately appealing to the idealist. Today there is just as much to offer but the future opened by this experience is completely negative. There is the military afterwards. There are no more graduate school deferments. Some people think this is good, for that way we all serve equally. I personally think it is a waste of good men. Everyday the Peace Corps is becoming less and less an appeal for male college graduates. Not only are individual men missing what I feel is "the best education I ever had;" the nation is extinguishing the breed of "change makers."

May I suggest that the possibility of the Peace Corps being an alternative to military service be studied again. Can we make another gentleman's agreement?

JOHN L. RECTOR
Former Volunteer

Salem, Ore.

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